

the plants to eat the seeds. Usually, the squirrels gnaw the pericarp of the fruits and eat the cotyledons. Whenever fruits with smaller seeds are encountered the whole fruit was eaten. In the case of *Cassia fistula* and *Prosopis chilensis* which possess pods, the pulp was eaten and seeds were discarded. The squirrel visited the flowers of *Rivea hypocrateriformis* and *Catunaregam spinosa* (= *Randia dumetorum*), to feed on nectar. From the observations it is inferred that, this squirrel appears to have a significant role to play in the pollination of its

food plants whose flowers it visited, but does not have a definite role in the dispersal of seeds of its food plants.

I thank Prof. P.V. Bole, for encouragement.

December 8, 1994

P. BALASUBRAMANIAN

Sálim Ali Centre for Ornithology & Natural History,  
Kalampalayam P.O.,  
Coimbatore-641 010,  
Tamil Nadu.

#### REFERENCES

BALASUBRAMANIAN, P. (1989). Nectar feeding by three striped palm squirrel *Funambulus palmarum* at Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu, *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 86:

437.

PRATHER, S.H. (1980): The Book of Indian Animals. Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay.

### 7. SIGHTING OF SPINY DORMOUSE *PLATACANTHOMYS LASIURUS* BLYTH, 1859 IN PEPPARA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT, KERALA

The Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary is situated at the South West end of the Western Ghats in Trivandrum District, Kerala State (8° 7' and 8° 53' N, 76° 40' and 77° 17' E, the altitude varies from 197 m to 1,363 m). The vegetation of the sanctuary consists of moist deciduous, semi evergreen and evergreen forests.

During the study on crop damage by wild animals in the Kani tribal settlements, the skin of a Spiny Dormouse *Platacanthomys lasiurus* Blyth 1859 was found in the Chemmankala kani settlement. The Spiny Dormouse is locally known "Mutteli". Ellerman and Morrison-Scott (1951) and Ellerman (1961) have reported the occurrence of these species from the near by Bonaccord area. Rajagopalan (1968) reported this species from Shimoga in Karnataka State. Apart from this no information is available on this species.

In the subsequent field surveys carried out in the Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary, three specimens of this species were collected and their habitat was studied.

Kani tribals used to catch these animals from the nearby forests, when they need them for medicinal purposes. They identify the nests of these animals by watching the water oozing out of the holds on trees. For catching them, they either cut open the trees or blow

smoke into the holes. The tribals believe that the flesh and spines of this species are a cure for respiratory diseases.

External measurements of the two specimens were:

	Subadult male (cm)	Subadult female (cm)
Head and body	11.5	13.00
Tail (with hair)	12.5 (9.5)	13.00 (9.5)
Left hind paw	2.5	2.5
Left ear	2.0	2.5

Our observation on the species revealed that it lived in colonies on live trees. The nests were found on *Terminalia bellerica*, *T. paniculata*, *Persea macrantha*, *Dillenia retusa* and *Careya arborea*. The animals were fed on Pepper (*Piper nigrum*), Cashewnut (*Anacardium occidentale*) and Cassava (*Manihot utilissima*). To some extent they are considered as pests of the above species.

June 11, 1994

E.A. JAYSON

G. CHRISTOPHER

Kerala Forest Research Institute,  
Peechi-680 653, Kerala, India.

#### REFERENCES

Rajagopalan, P.K. (1968): Notes on the Malabar Spiny Dormouse, *Platacanthomys lasiurus* Blyth 1859 with new distribution record. *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 65(1): 214-215.

Ellerman, J.K. & T.S.C. Morrison-Scott (1951): Checklist of Palearctic and Indian mammals, 1758-1946. British

Museum (Natural History), London, 810 pp.

Ellerman, J.R. (1961): The Fauna of India Including Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon, *Mammalia*. Vol. 3, Edited by M.L. Roonwal. Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta. Volumes 1 and 2. 884 pp.